

THE
CHURCH of *England's*
K.
COMPLAINT
Against the
Irregularities
Of some of its
CLERGY.

By a Presbyter of the Church of *England*.

*Aude aliquid brevibus Gyris & cartere dignum,
Si vis esse aliquis: Probitas laudatur & alget.* Juv.

Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season;
Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Long-suffering, and
Doctrine; for the time will come, when they will not
endure sound Doctrine. — *2 Tim. Ch. 4. 2, 3.*

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The Church of England's Complaint, &c.

May it please your Grace,

WHEN I reflect on (and consider) the Vast and almost Infinite Distance betwixt your Grace and me; I am almost afraid that my presuming to address your Grace, will meet with hard Censures from a Churlish and an Ill-natur'd Age: But, my Lord am Ant may see that which escapes the Eagle's View: For 'tis not only possible and probable, but 'tis also most certain, that the Inferior Clergy are more sensible of some Irregularities in some of their Brethren, than your Grace can be: For your Grace is so taken up with the Great Affairs both of Church and State, that 'tis not possible that small Matters should find Admittance.

Non vocat exiguis rebus adesse Jovi.

I don't doubt in the least, my Lord, but that 'tis the Duty of every Churchman to put his helping hand towards the Reforming some Abuses crept into the best of Churches, (as all the Foreign Reform'd do think our Mother to be:) But, without Offence, I hope, to my Superiors, I may have leave to make some just Reflection on True and Real Irregularities, committed by some of my Brethren. The Welfare of our Church I shall only regard, and the Persons of the Offenders I shall be tender of: But their Irregularities I shall not pass by without a just Censure. 'Twill be a great piece of service to our Church, if I set things right; and if those Irregularities be remov'd, a mighty Stumbling-block will be taken away, and our Dissenting Brethren will be mightily pleas'd; and in pleasing them I shall obtain your Grace's Favour: And who knows, but when they are in the Humour, they may become hearty and sincere Members of our Church, the Glory of the World, God send — I have the Prayers and good Wishes of all the Orthodox Clergy, that God would be pleas'd to bless my honest and well-meaning Understanding, and by it am in hopes that I shall merit your Grace's Favour: For would it not be a Heaven upon Earth, to have our Clergy without Spot or Wrinkle, and to be in such a State, that the worst, and most bitter of our Enemies should not have any just Grounds or Occasions to object against us. I do not pretend (for I cannot) to alledge any thing against the Morals of that Body; for the World is convinc'd, that they are a Sober and most the Learned Clergy in the Catholick Church. A Foreigner long ago, did stile our Clergy, *Srupor Mundi*, and it is as true still; and your Grace, and many others, are flaming, and eminent Instances of it.

The following Remarks strike at *Irregularities* of several sorts: As,

1. Such as swerve from the strict Observation of the Rubrick of our Church.

2dly, Such as violate the Canons of it.

3dly, I shall make my Remarks on some mixt Cases, yet *Irregularities*; All which in their Order.

The First sort of *Irregularities* are such as swerve from the strict Observation of the Rubrick of our Church.

'Tis agreed amongst the Clergy, that the Funeral Office ought to be us'd

* See the Rubrick before the Burial Office. only in Consecrated Ground, and the * Rubrick supposes it. And upon this depends a famous Story of the Wife of one of your Grace's Order; who was buried, say some, in Bunhill-Fields, among the Ranters, Fifth-Monarchy-Men,

Presbyterians, Antipædobaptists, Independants, and French Prophets; A

Blessed

fed Crew, to rise with at the Resurrection of the Just : Others say, that
Lady was buried at *Bethlehem-Ground*; the Place makes no great dif-
ference; only, say some, but I know not upon what Proof, that the latter
Ground was consecrated: Indeed, if this was true, I confess, it takes off a
great deal of the Scandal.

To this Honourable Funeral were invited Clergymen of great Figure;
amongst which were the learned M—, the Silver-tongu'd H—, with
C—, and others, that held up the Pall; and the Person officiating,
Mr. B—, who, I believe, upon second Thoughts, would have acted
otherwise.

Now, Gentlemen, and Brethren, if this Funeral Pomp was solemnized at
former Place, what a great Scandal have you brought on the Gown !
How can you answer it to God and the Church, to grace the *Cemiterium* of
Sincatics and worse, with your Presence upon such a solemn Occasion ?
I shall you, Mr. B—, if the Story be true, as I hope in God it is not, how
you answer your Behaviour to God, the Church, and my Lord the Bi-
shop. I shall not censure you, but shall leave that to your Reverend Diocesan.
But, say others, This mighty Noise is about Nothing, for that the Eu-
al was at *Bethlehem* Ground; and the Case is alter'd; for that Ground
solemnly consecrated by a Bishop. I am glad to hear it with all my
Heart: and to save their Credits, I wish it were true. But the Difficulty
is the Proof. But, Gentlemen, were it true 'twas more than you knew,
in you undertook that Business, and so 'twas only by mere Chance, you
were in the right. And to mollifie every thing, 'tis said, that it was the de-
sire of the Deceased to lie by her first Husband, be the Place where it will;
'tis a barbarous thing not to fulfil the Will of the Dead. In such a case,
I submit, I think otherwise; for Honour and my Lord's Character,
will be more than enough to appoint a Place of Burial. This Case ought
to be left to his Lordship's Discretion; and, if I may presume to offer my
Thoughts, a Cathedral, or Church would have been more Honourable for
Lady's Interment. But what shall I say? It may be, his Lordship had
Relations already in that Place, which procur'd more easily his Lord-
ship's Concurrence. But, your Grace, that descended from the sequestred
Orthodox Divines of our Church, I am sure, will think otherwise;
so I shall take leave of this Point, and submit it to your Grace's Judg-
ment and Censures.

I think I see a By-stander, thus addressing himself to your Grace; My
Lord, there have been loud Clamours, much Noise, and some Reflexions
of several Persons of Learning and Piety, concerning their Presence at
that Funeral. Be it so, that the Place of Burial was not consecrated
by a Bishop: What then? Is it reasonable, that some shall be censur'd, and
go scot-free for the self-same Act? I think, in such a case All ought
to be censur'd, or else acquitted. But, to come to the point: What was
done once at *Bunhill*, or *Bethlehem*, is weekly, and sometimes oftner,
at *Toper-Ground*, and yet no Din and Noise is raised against that Re-
verend Doctor; 'tis rather by some chosen, because not consecrated.
He—

What the Gentleman has alledged, is Fact, and its Truth is as clear
as the Meridian Sun: My Lord of *Landon* knows it, and I am told,
often proffer'd to consecrate it upon an Endowment, tho' small. His
Majesty is clear, and the Matter sticks somewhere else. And, to take
away

away all scandal for the time to come, I could wish, that your Grace would send out your Injunctions to that Doctor to stop all Funerals in that Ground and Baptisms in that Chappel, till both are consecrated.

2dly, There are some Clergymen, that have, as St. Peter says, forsaken the right way, and have gone astray, following the way of Balaam the Son of Beor, who loved the ways of unrighteousness. In plain English, my Lord, I mean some Clergy, when they visit the Sick, have the Hardiness (to call it worse) to take Money for it; and this I take for a scandalous Irregularity, and on which I next intend to Remark. I have too much reason, Lord, not to doubt of the Frequency of this very ill Practice, among some of the Clergy in and about London. I am told, that 'tis arriv'd to such Height and Esteem, that 'tis stiled a *Pretty Perquisite*. *O Tempora! O Mores!* Men of Figure some, and D. D. Divines, and other of inferiour Degrees make too too much practice of it. No Man has a more fervent Desire to maintain the Dignity of the Sacerdotal Office, than my self: and were it possible to stifie this horrid Practice, none would be more willing: But Contagion is spread, and there is a grand Necessity of applying a Remedy, and curing its Malignity; and to whom shall I apply, but to your Grace, to encourage this foul and enormous Practice. The Honour of the Clergy lies at stake; and to suffer such vile Doings to go on unpunish'd, will sink their Credit to such a Degree, that we shall become the Off-scouring and Ridicule of the Deists and Atheists. To visit the Sick, is the most charitable Office in the World, & has been so accounted in all Ages of the Christian Church. Atime a with shall we do nothing but the prospect of horrid Gain? 'Tis recorded of our Blessed Lord, that he went about doing good: But we do not read that he received Bribes for his extended Charity to the souls of Men. And dare who are his Ministers, presume to do otherwise? Dare we, who are pointed to attend dying Souls lying on the Beds of Languishing, expect Gains of Ungodliness? Good God! How are some of us fallen from practice of the Golden Ages of the Church! We blame, and that justly ask the practice of the Priests of the Church of Rome, in strolling about, abusing selling Indulgences to the Cheating the Souls of poor deluded Christians, and this Villainous practice was the first Motive of Martin Luther's Reformation from that Corrupted Church; & how near do those of our Church, whom Offence a gain of their visiting the Sick, come to them, I need not tell your Grace. But it may be said that 'tis a scandal thrown upon us by our Enemies, whose delight is to tarnish the Reputation of our Clergy. Would to God, it was the Case; But this I can assure your Grace, that there is too much truth in the Allegation; and within the little Circle of my own Knowledge, I can, (and am sorry to say it) prove it, even to a Demonstration; for instance in some particulars; there was a poor Woman that desired a Puritanical Doctor to visit her own Husband; and after his Exhortations and Prayers, she was willing to gratify him; she had but two Shillings and Sixpence in the whole World, and the Doctor had the Conscience (I call it) to leave her only the poor Size. The self-same Person (of whom I could multiply Instances, for I believe, 'tis his constant Practice) visited another Person (whom I well know) and who indeed was in good Circumstances) and from her took ten Shillings, and three for the Coach, though within one Mile from his own House. I do not know, but that this villainous Way of Proceeding has been the main Occasion of many Souls going prepared to the other World; for in my Walks I have seen too much of many times, and almost innumerable, I have my self been tempted to acc.

oney; but I thank God (who enabled me with Courage) that I always res'd it. I should be glad to know the Reason of such a general Inclination all sorts of People to proffer a Gratuity upon such solemn Occasions, if so too many Persons were not as ready to receive it. The Church requires good Men pray for) the Reformation of Manners of these Men; and lies at your Grace's Door to remove this Stumbling-Block.

Were I to search for the Original of this foul Practice, I believe I should find it amongst the Dissenting Teachers; and if it be so, is it not a burning shame for some of our Clergy to tread in their steps? I hope I have said enough (some Men may think too much) to move your Grace to Censure such Irregular Members that are guilty of this foul Practice, that tends to the dishonour of God, the discredit of the Church, and the hazard of their own immortal Souls.

Another great Irregularity amongst some of the Clergy, is the manner of Administration of * Private Baptism; the Church has ordered a Form for it; and I would ask the Question, How often is that Form us'd with Charge to the Parents, as it directs, to bring the Infant to Church to be received into the Congregation? But instead of that, the Publick Form is generally used; How Inconsistent? How incongruous? How Unaccountable is this way? In times of Yore 'twas therwise, and it lies in your Grace's Power to bring it to its pristine Use. Besides, as 'tis now practised, it makes meer Laquies of the Clergy, and they are oblig'd to dance after every one's Pipe for *filthy Lucres sake*, as the Apostle Ridicule titles it. This renders the Clergy vile and sordid in the Eyes of the Laity, and sinks the Sacerdotal Office to the lowest degree. In a little time a set Discourse about House-Baptism may see the Light: upon which account it will be needless to trouble your Grace any farther with it.

The Solemnization of * Marriages in some Places is very Irregular, and your Grace ought to be acquainted with it, being highly Scandalous in several Respects; I mean, some Clergymen daring to Marry without Banns or License. The Rubrick directs, That upon Festivals, they shall, where the Parties dwell, be publickly ask'd in the publick Congregation. But this good old way is notoriously abused and perverted by some, whose Names I could bring to Light, but I shall not presume to offer Reasons to stop this foul Practice, but shall leave it to your Grace, whose high Station in the Church, and whose vast knowledge, can easily find Ways and Means to put a stop to this abominable Practice, which very probably has been the Ruine of the Sons and Daughters of the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom. It has been a wonder to me, that their Complaints have not reached your Grace's Ears, and it is high time to apply a Remedy, and God grant the time was come that *there be no mere complaining in our Streets*. It is supposed by the Rubrick, that all Persons should be presellt at the publick Service, to offer up their Petitions to the Almighty; But a vile Practice has for some Years obtained that some of the Clergy spend their time (whilst the Congregation is employed in the Sacrifices of Prayers and Praises) I know not how, in the Vestries. This

Ought not to be done, it carries with it a loud Scandal, and puts a Stumblin Block in the way of the People. I cannot imagine what such Clergymen say in their own Defence, and how they can maintain this Fordid Practise. Their way is not defensible, and ought to be Censured. I was once told of Conference betwixt a Layman and a Doctor of Figure and Consummate Learning, on this Point. Sir, says the Layman, What thoughts have you of the Solemn way of Worship of our Church? To which the Doctor reply'd, That he thought it was the most Rational Piece of Service that was ever used in the Christian Church. Pardon me, Sir, I think, says the Layman, that your thoughts are otherwise; why so, says the Doctor? because replied he, your thoughts are otherwise; for why should I mind your Words when your Deeds must be Counter to them. Your meaning, quoth the Doctor. Well, Sir, replied the Layman, it cannot be, that your Sentiments are real, when you spend the time (that should be employed in the Congregation of the Saints) in the Vestry. At which the Doctor was Non-plussed, and so the Conference ended.

And now I cannot forbear to let your Grace know an odd Circumstance of a Lazy Clergyman, and how he spent his time in the Vestry during Divine Service, I was an Eye-Witness to the Matter of Fact; this Reverend Person I found stretched out at length on Chairs without Wigg, and Head tied up in Linen all the conning his F—'s Notes, This very odd sight strangely amazed me; an count had I not been a Spectator, its Narration would have been incredible. At first I took it for a Corps laid out, in order for Interment; but Motion soon put me at rest, and rectified my Sentiments. Your Grace's Order will alter this Irregularity, which I would tend to the Glory of God, and real Satisfaction of all true Christians. And I lately understand that the Industrious and Learned Mr. Bennet in one of his Tracts, has lashed this Irregularity, though I have not seen it; I doubt, and not doubt, but that he has done it to the purpose, and I hope to full purpose. As it will be superfluous in me to add more Words.

The next Irregularity I shall mention, is the time and season of publick Prayer set by the Clergy. In some Churches of the County, the Form of Prayer is only used on the Lords-Day, and in others only on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. This was not the prime intention of the Church, as is apparent from the Rubrick and Calendar. First for the Rubrick, ' And the Curate that ministrereth in every Parish-Church, or Chapel, being at Home, or not being otherwise reasonably hindred, shall say the same in the Parish-Church or Chapel, where he Ministrereth, and cause a Bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the People may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him.'

But this Rubrick, and others, must be accounted amongst the Cobwebs of Dr. Pain, or the Lumber of Dr. Isham; which odious Comparisons may be

* See the Rubrick concerning the Service of the Church. found in the Answer to Mr. Long's *Vox Cleri*, and in the *Visitation Sermon* of the latter, printed not long since by Walter Kettilby. What the first Doctor did, in comparing Queen Elizabeth to a nasty Slut that left Cobwebs in every Corner, was not strange, if you compare that with his other Actions; but the other amazed me, considering whose Chaplain he had been of a long standing, and considering what Reputation he had amongst the Learned and Orthodox Clergy; but the Doctor grew old and forgot himself; and this, my Lord, shews the Truth of that saying, *Humanum est errare*; and I must have the Charity for that excellent Person, as to say, that this was the only Bluntness of his Writings; but they are both gone to their place, and it is not Human to insult the Ashes of the Dead, always bearing in mind that of Loyal Cowley, viz.

'Tis wicked, with insulting Feet to tread
Upon the Monuments of the Dead.

But Secondly, as to the Calender, which has provided Lessons for all Days in
the Year. Now I would fain know what was the Intention of our Holy Mother
Church, in appointing a Calendar, if the Clergy were not daily to officiate.
The case is so plain, that I shall not expatiate, but shall leave it to my Bre-
thren to reflect on.

The Non-Administration of the Lord's Supper, is another Irregularity, and shall
not be spoken to. The Rubrick not only supposes, but is also express, that when
the Communion-Service is appointed to be used, that Service ought to conclude
with the Administration of the Lord's Supper. One Rubrick runs
thus : *So many as intend to be Partakers of the Holy Communion, and See the Office.*
Another begins thus : *The Table at the Communion-time, having a fair Lin-
en Cloth upon it — I would fain know, why are these Directions, if the Sacra-
ment is not to be administered at the same time?* Now the Church has appoint-
this Solemn Service to be used on all Sundays and Holidays; and therefore
all those Days the Lord's Supper is to be administered: Yet some are so un-
accountably Irregular, tho' the Sacrament is not always on those Days admin-
istered, yet, I know not how it comes to pass, the Prayer for the Church
so silent, with others, and the Blessing in some Churches, is wholly omitted,
which the Minister concludes in the Pulpit. This odd Practice (my Lord) I can-
not account for. In the proper Prefaces for the Communion-Service, those
in one Collects after Christmas, Easter, and Ascension-day, are to be used seven days
it; I defer, and upon Whitsunday, fix. The Church suppos'd the Sacrament on all
Days to be given, or why else are the Collects order'd to be read?
These were the Octaves of the Ancient Church; and so many Days, as Holidays,
are set apart for the Greater Solemnization of those Festivals, and the same
Prayer Communion-Office was read on all those Days; and not only so, but I believe
every day, and will appear from another Rubrick, that our Church commanded a daily Com-
munion, or else, I confess, I do not understand it. It runs thus, as your
Grace may see in the Order, how the rest of the H. Scripture is appointed to
not being read. Note also, that the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, appointed for the
Church on Sunday, shall serve all the Week after, where 'tis not in this Book otherwise
into a consider'd. Now what can be said to this Rubrick, if the Collect, Epistle and
Gospel be enjoyn'd to be read every day, then must the Communion-Service
likewise read: If so, than the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the
Cobwebbed, is to be daily given, *quod erat demonstrandum*. I am afraid by some this
may be a Rubrick is to be thrown away with the Cobwebs and Lumber of the two Re-
vivification Dottors. But there is no manner of Doubt, but that your Grace thinks
otherwise; and so with your Grace's leave, I'll pass to some other Matter.

The next Irregularity I shall speak to, relates to the Non-Observation of
Vigils, Feasts and Fasts which our Church has commanded. There are se-
veral Reasons assign'd by Learned Men for the Institution of Vigils, which
eriting what comes from the Latin *Vigilia*, Watchings; but none comes nearer the Truth,
but the Dr. those who impute the Rise of these Night-Watches, to the necessity Chri-
stianity. Persons were under of meeting in the Night, and before Day, for the Exercise
of their Devotions in common, by reason of the Malice and Persecution of their
enemies, who endeavoured their Destruction, when they discover'd them to be
the Dead Christians. God be thank'd there is not yet the same reason for those of the
Church to observe the Vigils: But God only knows, how soon (for our Sins)
may be our case: For it is sad to consider, and a melancholick Theme to infest
when we see the Church and Priesthood insulted with Deists, Socinians,

and all sorts of Dissenters, and no check put to it by the Higher Powers. But now 'tis stranger to consider the Boldness of our Enemies, when the Person upon whom the Throne is a strict Observer of the Doctrine of our Church.

But, 'tis to be hop'd the Reign of our rampant Enemies is but short. Given to send —

But another Reason which still holds good, for the Observation of the Vigils, is this; * It was the Custom of the Primitive Christians to pass great part of the Night that precedeth certain Holidays, in Devotions and Religious Exercises: and this even in those Places which they set apart for the publick Worship of God. But when these Night-Meetings began to be so far abused, that no Care could prevent several Disorders,

and Irregularities, the Church shouzbs fit to abolish them, and these Night-Watchings, were converted into Fasts, still keeping the former Name of Vigils. Our Church still commands the Observation of them, as is apparent from the Table of Vigils, before the Nativitv of our Lord, and several other Festivals. And the Rubrick after the Nicene Creed enjoins the Curate to declare what Fasting Days in the Week following are to be observ'd. And what the Days of Fasting or Abstinence are, may be learnt from the Rubrick; as the 40 Days of Lent, &c.

See the Rubrick. The next is Festivals, or Days kept in Commemoration of our Saviour and his Apostles; and we are informed by the abovesaid pious and Religious Person (whose admirable Book, I think, ought to be in all Hands, as I dare say, 'tis in your Grace's) how they ought to be employ'd: But first, we ought to know, how the Primitive Christians observ'd these Days of Joyfulness, which was thus: * They were wont once a Year to meet at the Graves of the Martyrs, there solemnly to recite their pious Examples, for their holy Lives, and happy Deaths. Besides,

they celebrated these Days with great Expressions of Love and Charitv to the Poor, and mutual Rejoicings with one another. — The next Enquiry is, how these Days ought now to be observ'd. We should (says the aforesaid Great Person) constantly attend the Publick Worship, and partake of the Bless'd Sacrament, if it be a Jadministred. In private, we should enlarge our Devotions, and suffer the Affairs of the World to interrupt us as little as may be. — If we do not commemorate any Mystery of our Redemption, or Article of our Faith, we ought to confirm our Belief in it, by considering all those Reasons upon which it is built, that we may be able to give a good account of the Hope that is in us. We should from our Hearts offer to God the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and resolve to perform all those Duties, which result from the Belief of such an Article. If we commemorate any Saint, we should consider the Virtues for which he was eminent, and by what Steps he arriv'd at great Perfection; and then examine our selves how far we are defective in our Duties, and earnestly beg God's Pardon for our past Fasings, and his Grace to enable us to conform our Lives for the time to come, to those admirable Examples that are set before us. Thus far that excellent Author.

That Festivals ought to be kept in our Church, is plain from the Table of Feasts: And that the Clergy ought to give such Notice to the People on the Lord's Day, is as plain from the Rubrick after the Nicene Creed. Now it wuld be richly worth your Grace while to order an Inquirenaum thro' your Province in this, as well as in other Matters: But I dare not presume to dictate. —

The next Irregularity I shall mention, is this: Some of our Brethren have got a lazy way of repeating other Mens Sermons. Now, I think, this is against the Rubrick; for that after the Nicene Creed it thus directes; Then shall follow the Sermon, or one of the Homilies —

ers. But now 'tis supposed, that if a Person (as 'twas the case of many at the Dawning upon the Reformation) be so ignorant, as not able to compose a Sermon, then the Church orders him to read one of the Homilies. But if he be of Ability, God then to use one of his own composing. But the case is alter'd; for I've often heard (and blushing for them I speak it) other Mens Works echo'd from the Pulpit; and I do not in the least doubt, but that others have so too. I could name the Persons, but shall not at present; I do not know what I shall do thereafter. What a shame it is to hear the Works of the Profound Barrow, Great Tillotson, and many others of Fame, odly managed, and uncouthly Disord'ren't from the Pulpit. I think, with submission, this ought to be rectify'd. Wchbey, more than that, there's a greater Insolence behind. I could name to your Grace those Men who had the Forehead, not only to deliver other Mens Work, but also to print them, tho' printed before. What shall I call this? And the one of this sort of Men was Camp Chaplain to Gracious K. William of not-be-forgotten Memory by your Grace.

The next Remark shall be upon the Irregularity of the Burial of the Dead. The Rubrick runs in these Words: *The Office ensuing is not to be used for any that dye un-baptized, or excommunicate, or have died violent Hands upon themselves.* See the Rubrick. I have reason to think, that some of the Clergy do often violate the two last Clauses. To begin with the last, concerning Suicide: If a Person (as I could instance in many) of a great Estate, makes away with himself, his Relations shall have the Credit of the Attendance of Clergy, and the Office (Oh shame to speak it) of Burial shall be read. His, my Lord, ought not to be done; for where's the Hope that a Self-Murderer sleeps in Jesus; and that Office is only to be used for such that dye in the Lord. As for Excommunicates, 'tis plain and express, that they are excluded, and have no manner of right to that Solemn Office; yet how often is now these used for all Sorts of Schismaticks. The Ancient, nay, our Church, in one Person, the Canons, censures them as *ipso facto* Excommunicates. And, my Lord, if it be a Jest to say, they are not Schismaticks, because the Civil Government have exempted them from certain Penalties, laid on them by several Acts of Parliament, which are only *pro tempore* suspended. Now I think, with submission to my Superiors, If they were Schismaticks (as no doubt they were) before the Act of Toleration, they continue still so, and so by consequence, as Excommunicates, they have no shadow of Right to have that Office used at their Funerals; and your Clergy hope that your Grace will redress that intolerable Injustice: for how can we use these Expressions concerning Schismaticks (iv'd at first no dye in their Schism) *In sure and certain op — as our hope is this our Duty, other doth.* This is a hardship upon the Clergy, and I cannot account for it, unless we must not mangle the Service, and if we use the whole, it is to the highest degree absurd and unaccountable. What must we do in this Extremity? Your Grace, only with the Assistance of an Honest Convocation, can relieve us. Would Table of God that time was come. I dare say, that those Pious Compilers of our Common Prayer (who sealed it with their dearest Blood, thought as I do, viz. after that Schismaticks had not right to that Office. For the Sin of Schism is of that Graceous Hue, that some of the Ancient Fathers thought; that Atonement for this, could not be attained, tho' by Martyrdom it self. And I apt to think, that Pious Reformers had some such Thoughts of it. For Schism, as the Words chren have port, is Division, or a cutting off from the Catholick Church: And if so, Now, if it be the case of Hood-winkt Dissenters, I am sure they have no right to that Office.

Now I shall only mention one more Irregularity, or a breaking in upon the Rubrick.

brick by some of the Clergy, and that is Churching at Home. The Rubric comply
See the Rubrick. directs the Woman, at the usual time after her Delivery to them
come into the Church — Then the Priest shall say to her, is not
but the present practice in some places is quite reverst. It must be done in a gr
the Chamber, or not at all. Now could we perswade those Persons to bring their tender Children to the Church to be enroll'd Members of the Catholic Church; I hope their tender Mothers would oblige the Congregation with their Company; for what place so proper, as the Altar, to return God thanks for those wonderful Mercies they lately received. And yet no Arguments will prevail; in defence of this Practice, many Pretences, (and they are nothing but Pretences) are used; as catching of Cold, Modesty, and what not. But the true reason is at the bottom; and that is, Pride. The Clergy must dance after them, and they will be attended. Tho' the practice is Servile, yet it is, I v
the Clergy, I hope, 'tis not sinful, at least not more sinful, than Baptizing (without any necessity) at Home; I have done with my Remarks on the Violators of our Rubrick; and leave them now to the Censure of your Grace.

2. I shall proceed (with your Grace's leave) in the second place to consider the Violators of the Canons of our Church, as they are Clergy-Men; but all beg your Grace's Pardon and Attention, whilst I run thro' the whole Body of the

Canons and Constitutions of the Church; which are confirmed See the Can. and by Act of Parliament; I shall only (at present) make some Re
Constitut. of K. marks; How many are violated by some of the Clergy.

The first Canon commands all Ecclesiasticks from the Arch-bishop to the Priest, to maintain the King's Supremacy; and in the Body of the Canon is this Clause; Furthermore, all Ecclesiastical Persons having cure of Souls, and all other Preachers, and Readers of Divinity Lectures, shall to the utmost of their Wit, Knowledge and Learning, purely and sincerely, and (without any Colour and Disimulation) Teach, Manifest, Open, and declare four times every year (at least) in their Sermons, and other Collations and Lectures, that all Usurped and Sovereign Power is fully taken away — Is this Canon strictly observed by the Clergy? Do all Preachers and Lecturers comply with the Letter of it? Upon a Melius Inquiredum, I am afraid, your Grace will find it, almost, if not wholly laid aside. I am sure the Toleration Act does not affect it; therefore it continues in Force; and obliges the Clergy to a due Observation; and I know not, how they can Answer the Non-observance of it; I wish, I could find out a Method to excuse them.

The fourteenth Canon relates to the Form of Divine Service, which is to be used on Sundays and Holidays; and in the Body of that Canon is this Clause; All Ministers likewise shall observe the Orders, Rites and Ceremonies prescrib'd in the Book of Common-Prayer, as well in reading the Holy Scriptures and saying of Prayers, as in Administration of the Sacraments, without either diminishing in regard of Preaching, or in any other respect; or adding in the Matter or Form thereto. Is this Cannon in all and every part strictly observed by all the Clergy? Is there no Curtailing, Mangling, or adding to the Prayers? It is worth an Enquiry.

The fifteenth Canon orders the Litany to be read by the Clergy on Wednesdays and Fridays; I would fain know, whether this Canon is strictly observed by the Parochial Clergy in the Country; I am afraid upon search 'twill be found otherwise.

The twenty seventh Canon orders, that Schismaticks should not be admitted to the Communion. No Minister, when he Celebrates the Communion, shall willingly Administer the same to those that refuse to kneel, upon

The pain of Suspension, nor to any depravers of the Common-Prayer, &c. Upon this Canon I shall presume to make two Remarks; as first, do any of the Clergy comply with the request of superstitious People, as to give the Holy Sacrament very to them, sitting in their Seats? I know, that has been done formerly; I wish to hear if is not now by some of the moderate Clergy. The next Remark shall be up-done in a great difficulty, lying upon some of the Clergy, the case is this; suppose to bring a notorious Schismatick, qualifying himself for a Place of profit upon that Scan-tholicious Practice of Occasional Communion. This Person offers himself to the Minister, tho' he never designs to be there again, except it be upon the same occasion. If the Minister admits the Schismatick to Communion; he violates the Canon; if he refuses him; the Schismatik brings his Action against him one of the Courts of Westminster; which may prove the actual Ruin of the Clergy-man. Now, my Lord, what's to be done in this case? I wish your Grace will oblige the World with your Sentiments on it. But were it my own yet, I would observe the Canon, and leave the event to God; I should rather baptizing commit my Conscience and Family to his disposal; be the consequence what it e. Violation. If I admit him, I am liable to three years Suspension, which may be my ruin, as to my temporal Affairs; if I refuse him; I can be but undone with the violence of my Conscience, and Disobedience to the Canon and my Diocesan.

The 28th Canon, Orders that Strangers should not be admitted to the Communion; and in the Body of it, the Church-wardens are to take notice, whether any Stangers come often and commonly from other Parishes to their church, and shall shew their Minister of them, lest perhaps they be admitted to the Lord's Table amongst others, which they shall forbid, and remit such home to their own Parish Churches and Ministers, there to receive the Communion with the rest of their Neighbours. Do the Churchwardens and Ministers act, as the Canon en-
Divinitus, for in the Canon both are comprehended? do they order such to return
ly and fit their own Churches, there to receive? I am afraid, nay, I am sure, that
Open, none of the Clergy are in this case tardy. Right Reason is the Foundation of
— Is this not providing so well for the welfare of the Church, as they have done in this
ers concient Canon. For were that minded, as it ought to be, that would pre-
aid, yount a further mischief, that often happens, which is, the admitting of Excom-
'leration nunciates and other Notorious Sinners to that sacred Ordinance. For suppose
the Clergy Excommunicate, or any notorious ill Liver is repuls'd, as they ought to
Non-obser from the Lord's Table, they could never be admitted elsewhere; for an
ommunicate, whilst so, is shut out of the whole Catholick Church; and
hich is to was the practice of the Primitive Christians, and ought to be so, not only
at Canon our Church, but where ever the Church of Christ is dispers'd. Besides, this
, Rites an- wance of People strowling from their Parochial Ministries, often produces
g the Hol- her ill Effect, viz. a slight to their own Pastors, and an admiration for
is, without Stangers, which, I think, ought to be prevented; and a due Observation of
ding in the Canon, with your Grace's Injunction, would put a stop to this unhappy
observance.

The 33d Canon relates to Titles of such, as are to be made Ministers; too long to Transcribe, I shall only cull out, what are true Titles, and ifications for Orders. A Presentation to some Living, or a true and un-
ited Certificate, that a Person is provided of some Church within the said
ess. Or a Vacancy in the Cathedral Church of that Diocese; or in some
egiate Church therein; or Fellow of a College, or Conduct in either Uni-
Y; or Master of Art of five years standing, living at his own Expence in
either

either University, or accept by the Bishop himself, that doth ordain him Minister. — These are all the Titles and Qualifications that I find in this Canon for Holy Orders, and how strangely is it perverted! My Lord of *Sarum* his admirable Pastoral Care insists Strongly and Strenuously upon the Loss of Certificates, and rightly observes, what vast Mischiefs such easy Certificates do bring to the Church; and it would be a great Blessing to the Church, if all Clergymen would follow his admirable Directions; we should not then have so many indigent Clergy, complaining in our Streets. The Order would be then more rever'd, and greater respect would be shewn them; for a poor and scandalous Clergyman, I am sure, is the strangest figure in the World; And I wish, I could say, that there were none belonging to our Church. But it can't be expected, that this Grievance should be removed except greater care were taken about Recommendations to my Lords, the Bishops. They, God knows, are not to be blamed. But 'tis the easy Clergyman with his unseemly Characters, that imposes upon their Lordships. *Habere Licencia* — I could give many Instances of this vile Practice to your Grace, but one only at present shall suffice, and that is more than enough to shew this horrid Mischief in a true Light. There's a certain Clergyman (whose Name I shall conceal for many Reasons) that has a Place of no more value than eight Pound per Annum, that has given four Titles, that I know of, to several Persons, that have been ordained upon that very Title: The first Person that was Ordain'd, did not read Prayers at the place of his Title; He now, if alive, in a strowling and Starving Condition, begs from Door to Door for a poor and scandalous Maintenance. The second could not live in *England*, but went to *Virginia* to try his Fortune, and some years after return'd to his own Country; and I hear he's in a low and despicable Condition. The third Person never so much as saw the Face of an University, and yet as soon as Ordain'd set up with *Aesop's* Crow, for a mighty Preacher; But his Temporal Estate may prevent Poverty. The fourth is a Man of Parts, and I wish I could say, Prudence, and would live and scuffle in the World for his Wife and Family; if his Superiors in that place would encourage him; I know him Personally; I am sure, that he has more Learning, than all the other three. But this Melancholy theme to insist on, I shall say no more on this Head, but with *Humblety Supplicating* your Grace for the sake of the Clergy, and their Miserable Condition, to find some Method to put a stop to this vile Practice, that produces Beggars for the Sacred Order.

The forty first Canon, treats of Licenses for Pluralities of Benefices.

Can. 1. Limited, and Residence enjoy'd. In the Body of it is this remarkable Clause, on which I shall Remark, provided always, that he be by a good cause, *sufficiente cauzione ostendit*, bound to make his Personal Residence in each of his said Benefices for some reasonable time of the year, *per bonam annu cujus partem*, as 'tis in the Latin. Now the Question is, what and how long is meant by reasonable time, *bona pars anni partem*. That must be Answer'd by your Grace. What then shall I say of those that seldom or never make any Period of Residence; or those that have no License from their Diocesans. There's doubt to be made, but that such Fathers, or rather Wolves, have a heavy count to give to God and their Flocks for that scandalous Practice of Non-Residence. That case your Grace knows, and what ill Effect Non-Residence upon the Church; but I shall say no more at present; it being largely treated in two Pamphlets, viz. *The Case of Non-Residence*; *the Reasonableness of bringing in a Bill, to oblige the Clergy to reside*, which I presume your Grace has seen; and which

[†] See the Case of Non-Residence and Reasonableness, &c.

ever been Answered nor never will. In a little time Bishop *Carlton's* thoughts Non-Residence will see the Light, being a Supplement to the Case of Non-Residence, to which other Testimonies against that scandalous Practice will be added.

The fifty fifth Canon contains the Form of Prayer to be used by Preachers before their Sermons; I am afraid some of the Clergy Transgres this Canon; the Words, as briefly as they conveniently may, I am sure, exclude long-winded, incoherent stuff, too much affected by some Preachers. 'Tis certain, that our publick Form of Worship is very extensive, and comprehends all Cases; and I find no occasion for a long Harangue before Sermons. I am confident, that those that use them, design a Slur upon the publick Form, and bring a Contempt upon it. Some Lecturers, can't be excused; for they spend their time, I know not how, in the Vestries, during the time of Divine Service; and then they mount the Pulpit with their Amusements. 'Twould be a vast Advantage to your Church; if a strict, and unvariable Form was prescrib'd for all Preachers, and a Mulet proposed to be inflicted on the Violators. It woud prevent gadding and stragling from their own Pastors; it woud promote Unanimity amongst Christians, Peace, and Concord between Pastor and People; a Blessing, I am afraid too great to be expected in this Debauch'd and Atheistical Age. A Convocation, if encouraged by your Grace, might procure such a Blessing, which God grant.

Preachers and Lecturers by the 56th. Canon are obliged to read Divine Service twice a year, which if not done, to be Suspended. That it is not done is a vagrant Truth, and your Grace, I suppose, is not insensible of it. The Desolate state is by some had in so great Contempt, that a Scarce by no manner of means look well in it. But these Gentleman ought to consider, that the Duty of offering the Sacrifice of Prayers and Praise is of more weight and value than reaching; but I shall meet with those mighty Don's in another Place, when I come to treat about mixt Cases: I shall therefore proceed to some fresh matter.

The fifty sixth Canon obliges the Clergy to Catechise every Sunday and Holy-day, and in the body of it they are censur'd for that Omission; If any Minister neglect his Duty therein, let him be sharply reproved upon the first Complaint — after the submitting himself to the Bishop, we shall willingly offend herein, let him be Suspended. If so the third time — then Excommunicate, and so remain, till he be Reformed. This Pious Canon, I believe, was strictly observed, till those unhappy Civil Wars of Forty One, which caused the Sequestration of your Grace's Father, and the Murder of an Innocent King, with the Ruine of the Church and State. Then Canting and Hypocrisy kick'd out Catechising, which could never be restored; People love to have their Ears tickled, though their understandings are not Edified, which Catechising would do. + All sorts of People are prodigiously Ignorant in the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion, and Catechising would retrieve that Ignorance to the Glory of the Church, and the great Education of the Souls of Multitudes.

The sixty second Canon relates to the times of Marriage, which Can. 62. must be Solemniz'd betwixt the Hours of eight and twelve in the morning, and in time of Divine Service, *Tempore precum publicarum*, as the Latin canon has it; and I would feign know the Sense and Reason of that Expression; I am told by a Learned * Man, a Sufferer with your Grace's Father, that Morning Prayer on Sundays and Holy-days began at Eight in the Morning; when ended, Marriages were solemniz'd in the face of the Congregation; Doubts and Cases of Conscience were

^f See the Decay of Christian Piety, 402, 403.

* Heylin Hist. of the Reformation.

were then Answer'd by the Clergy, &c. Atten the Communion Service began, then followed the Sermon, and the Celebration of the Lord's Supper. I take to be the meaning of *Tempore precum publicarum*; if it is not, I earnestly desire a better Account from your Grace, or any other Learned Man. The fringers of this Canon are to be suspended *per triennium*, as is apparent from the beginning of the Canon. No Minister upon Pain of Suspension *per triennium* *falso*, &c. The Violators of this Canon have done an incredible deal of mischief; for how many have lost their Children to the utter undoing of them which shews the necessity of obliging the Clergy to a strict Observance of it. But I have spoke of the Case of Marriage before, and I need not repeat.

Can. 69. The 69th Canon relates to Ministers Baptizing Children in case of Danger; and if the Minister refuse to go upon real Account, he's to be Suspended for three Months. This is so charitable an Office, as a Man would think, that a Heart of Stone only would refuse it. Yet some won't move, except they be paid for the Journey. Our Catechism tells us, that *we are by Nature born in Sin and the Children of Wrath*; and shall some of the Clergy by their Supineness and Covetousness, be the occasion that they should not by Baptism be made the *Children of Grace*? This ought not to be done. 'Tis a sad Cruelty to the Souls of those poor Infants; for Baptism makes them *Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*. Here I stop, and shall not at present proceed any further in the Canons. I shall only mention one or two mixt Cases, which would not properly fall in with the Rubrick and Canons, and so put an end to this Discourse.

First then, that Lecturers in the modern Sense of the Word are oblig'd upon a Penalty to receive a Divine Service once a Month. Our Church and State, by God's Blessing being recovered out of the confusion of the late times of Ultrication, which was mainly promoted and carried on by canting, Hypocritical, and sniveling Lecturers; our Senate, in the 14th of K. Charles II. ot gloriou Memory, took this Case into consideration, and wisely provided for the Welfare of Church and State, by the prudent Act of Uniformity; and, I dare say, were it put into strict Execution, it would exclude that Generation of Vipers, whose Fathers eat out the Bowels of their Mother the Church. The Lord Clarendon, in his immortal History of the Civil Wars, wisely observes that the St. Antoline's Lecturers were the first Trumpeters that sounded from the Pulpit Rebelellion against their Sovereign K. Charles the Martyr. And for the future, to prevent if possible, Rebellion in the State, and Schism in the Church, the Act of Uniformity, that sticks much in the Stomachs of Schismaticks, was composed. That which relates to Lecturers, fol-

lows in these Words: *And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, that no Person shall be received as a Lecturer, or permitted, suffered or allowed to preach as a Lecturer in any Church, Chappel, or other Place of publick Worship within the Realm of England, Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick upon Tweed, unless he first approved, and thereunto Licensed by the Archishop of the Province, or Bishop of the Diocese, or (in case the See be vacant) by the Guardian of the Spiritualities under his Seal; and shall in the Presence of the Archishop, or Bishop, or Guardian, read the nine and thirti Article of Religion, mentioned in the Statute of the thirteenth of the late Queen Elizabeth, which Declaration of his unsiegnd Assent to the same; and that every Person and Persons, who now is, hereafter shall be Licensed, Appointed, or Received as Lecturer, to Preach upon any day of the Week in any Church or Chappel, place of Publick Worship within this Realm of England, or places aforesaid, the first time he Preacheth (before his Sermon) shall Openly, Publickly, and Solemny read the Common-Prayers and Service in and by the said Book appointed to be read at that time of the Day, and then and there publicly and openly declare his Assent unto and Approbation of the said Book, and to the use of all the Prayers, Rites and Ceremonies, Forms and Orders therein contained and prescribed according to the Form before appointed in this Act; And also shall upon the first Lecture-day of every Month afterwards, so long as he continues Lecturer and Preacher there, at the place appointed for his said Lecture or Sermon, before the said Lecture or Sermon, openly, publickly and Solemny read the Common-Prayers in and by the said Book appointed to be Read for that time of the Day, at which the said Lecture or Sermon is to be held.*

ached ; And after such Reading thereof, shall Openly and publickly before the Congregation Assembled, Declare his unfeigned Assent, and Consent unto, and Approbation of the Book, and to the use of all the Prayers, Rites and Ceremonies, Forms and Orders therein contained and prescribed, according to the Form aforesaid ; And that all and every such Person or Persons, who shall neglect or refuse to do the same, shall from thenceforth be disabled to Preach said, or any Lecture or Sermon in the said or any other Church. —— I do not hear as God grant I never may, That that Clause is repealed, yet I am confident, that 'tis gingly and knowingly omitted to be put in Practice; 'tis a vast affront to Authority, and a Contempt to the Church and its pious Offices : In short, this general neglect of Lectures in this Point makes the World believe, that they despise their Superiors, and their Censures the very Authority of the Church and Queen.

condly, and lastly, The next thing that I shall speak of, is the ful Method of Pulpit Commendations ; 'Tis not known, what a religious deal of Mischief, such Characters do to common Christians ; it would make ones Hair stand an-end, to hear a Common Bachee commended for his Virtues, and Women guilty of Adultery, ced for their Chastity, and Men that deny the common Articles of n, applauded for Christianity ; 'twas my hap once to hear a piece Sermon, Preached at the Funeral of an overthrown rich Com- er; and to my Amazement the Preacher was placing him in Para without the necessity of believing several Articles of Faith ; in- I my self, as well as others were afraid, that all the Articles were ng at once, and that dry Morality alone was security enough to a Man in Bliss and Happiness. *Auri sacra Fames* has a mighty ence on some Preachers, and a present Recompence prevails more, the Recompence of Reward in the other World. Another Per- heard extolling one to the Skies for a Virtuous, good Wife, of n 'twas credibly reported, that she was not Married, but had several Years in the Sin of Adultery.

The whole Town has rung of that infamous Sermon of that Scandal- Doctor, that was Preach'd at the Funeral of the late D----of D---- Character and Life is too well known to be insisted on ; and Dun- his Book ; viz. *Hazard of a Death-Bed Repentance*, has recko- with that Doctor ; I wish, it had been done by an abler and more Hand, I have not time to enlarge, but shall only give some Manly es of an Honest Gentleman in his excellent Sermon at Oxford. He reating of the Mischief of such fulsome Pulpit Characters in these ds ; + But as the Difference of Persons may alter Degrees of Guilt ; some according to the Stations, in which they are plac'd, are more unpardonable in putting Good + Trap be- and Evil for Good, than others : And those in whom fore the Judges- could be most intolerable, are Persons of a Sacred cter. If they, whose Judgment and Authority are and ought to be, much Weight, whose proper business it is to interpret the Scriptures, truly represent the Mind of God ; if they out of Fear, or Hope, or minister Design, should deliver that for Virtue, which they know and e to be Vice ; or any way Prevaricate, and handle the word of God fully ; of how sore a Punishment would these be thought Worthy, who mis-lead the Souls committed to their Charge, Prostitute their High

High and Holy Office to such vile purposes, and bring a Reproach that Profession, which they ought to Adorn. Our Blessed Lord assure that whosoever shall break the least of his Commandments and teach Men shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. Should any then of Sacred Order make Panegyricks upon the worst of Men, only because they are great Men; Smooth over some of their Vices, and praise them for it. Flatter the Dead, to make their Court to the Living, and all at the expense of their Integrity, by venting false Doctrine, as well as false Ory, in order to advance their Fortunes, and serve their wretched Interest in this World. What a Mass of Guilt would they heap upon themselves if they would imitate the Example of Judas in betraying their Lord's Religion for Money, as the other Traitor did his Person; and without severest and timely Repentance, would by the worst sort of Simony pay Souls for the Purchase of their Preferments.

I shall present your Grace with one Instance more of fulsome Praise and Commendation, and then I have done. One of our Grace's Predecessors, Arch-Bishop T-----n in a Sermon before the King: He had extolled the French King to the Skies for his Art of War and Valour, not, at last applies this Scripture, Behold a greater than he is here, King William: For which among other things, he, I mean the Arch-Bishop, was Sainted by the Holbourn Doctor in his Prayer before the Sons of the Clergy in Cheapside. I shall now Conclude all with hearty Prayers for the Clergy of our Church, in the Words of the Incomparable Letany. That it would please God to Illumine (your Grace and) all Bishops, Priests and Deacons, with Knowledge and Understanding of his Word, and that both by Preaching and Living, they may set it forth, and shew it according to the Truth.

And Grant this, O Lord, for the Honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, be ascribed all Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion, World without End. Amen.

LAUS DEO SOLI.

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